TALES OF A GRANDFATHER

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The Trial of Wallace.

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER

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CONTENTS.

THE STORY OF MACBETH 7

THE STORY OF WILLIAM WALLACE 30

THE ADVENTURES OF BRUCE 58

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN 105

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN 122

THE GOOD KING JAMES 129

THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN 148

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Trial of Wallace . . . . *Frontispiece*

Lady Macbeth and Her Husband 12

Bruce and the Spider 73

The Battle of Bannockburn 112

At the Battle of Otterburn 127

The Murder of King James 144

TALES OF A GRANDFATHER.

THE STORY OF MACBETH.

THERE was once a king of Scotland called Duncan, a very good old man. He had two sons; one was called Malcolm, and the other Donaldbane. But King Duncan was too old to lead out his army to battle, and his sons were too young to help him.

At this time Scotland, and indeed France and England, and all the other countries of Europe, were much harassed by the Danes. These were a very fierce, warlike people, who sailed from one place to another, and landed their armies on the coast, burning

and destroying everything wherever they came. They were heathens, and did not believe in the Bible, but thought of nothing but battle and slaughter and making plunder.

Now, it happened in King Duncan's time that a great fleet of these Danes came to Scotland, and landed their men in Fife, and threatened to take possession of that province. So a numerous Scottish army was levied to go to fight against them. The king, as I told you, was too old to command his army, and his sons were too young. He therefore sent out one of his near relations, who was called Macbeth. He was son of Finel, who was thane, as it was called, of Glamis. The governors of provinces were at that time in Scotland called thanes; they were afterwards termed earls.

This Macbeth, who was a brave soldier, put himself at the head of the Scottish army, and marched against the Danes. And

he carried with him a relation of his own, called Banquo, who was Thane of Lochaber, and was also a very brave man.

So there was a great battle fought between the Danes and the Scots; and Macbeth and Banquo, the Scottish generals, defeated the Danes, and drove them back to their ships, leaving a great many of their soldiers both killed and wounded. Then Macbeth and his army marched back to a town in the north of Scotland, called Forres, rejoicing on account of their victory.

Now there lived at this time three old women in the town of Forres whom people looked upon as witches. These three old women went and stood by the wayside, in a great moor or heath near Forres, and waited till Macbeth came up. And then, stepping before him as he was marching at the head of his soldiers, the first woman said, "All hail, Macbeth; hail to thee,

Thane of Glamis!" The second said, "All hail, Macbeth; hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!" Then the third, wishing to pay him a higher compliment than the other two, said, "All hail, Macbeth; thou shalt be King of Scotland!"

Macbeth was very much surprised to hear them giving him these titles; and while he was wondering what they could mean, Banquo stepped forward and asked them whether they had nothing to tell about him, as well as about Macbeth. And they said that he should not be so great as Macbeth, but that, though he himself should never be a king, yet his children should succeed to the throne of Scotland, and be kings for a great number of years.

Before Macbeth was recovered from his surprise, there came a messenger to tell him that his father was dead, so that he was become Thane of Glamis by inheritance.

And there came a second messenger, from the king, to thank Macbeth for the great victory over the Danes, and tell him that the Thane of Cawdor had rebelled against the king, and that the king had taken his office from him, and had sent to make Macbeth Thane of Cawdor as well as of Glamis. Thus the two first old women seemed to be right in giving him those two titles. I dare say they knew something of the death of Macbeth's father, and that the government of Cawdor was intended for Macbeth, though he had not heard of it.

However, Macbeth, seeing a part of their words come to be true, began to think how he was to bring the rest to pass, and make himself king, as well as Thane of Glamis and Cawdor. Now Macbeth had a wife who was a very ambitious, wicked woman, and when she found out that her husband

thought of raising himself up to be King of Scotland, she encouraged him in his wicked purpose by all the means in her power, and persuaded him that the only way to get possession of the crown was to kill the good old king, Duncan.

Macbeth was very unwilling to commit so great a crime, for he knew what a good sovereign Duncan had been ; and he recollected that he was his relation, and had been always very kind to him, and had entrusted him with the command of his army, and had bestowed on him the government or thanedom of Cawdor.

But his wife continued telling him what a foolish, cowardly thing it was in him not to take the opportunity of making himself king, when it was in his power to gain what the witches promised him. So the wicked advice of his wife and the prophecy of these wretched old women at last brought Mac-

beth to think of murdering his king and his friend. The way in which he accomplished his crime made it still more abominable.

Macbeth invited Duncan to come to visit him at a great castle near Inverness; and the good king, who had no suspicions of his kinsman, accepted the invitation very willingly. Macbeth and his lady received the king and all his retinue with much appearance of joy, and made a great feast, as a subject would do to make his king welcome. About the middle of the night the king desired to go to his apartment, and Macbeth conducted him to a fine room which had been prepared for him.

Now it was the custom, in those barbarous times, that, wherever the king slept, two armed men slept in the same chamber, in order to defend his person in case he should be attacked by any one during the night. But the wicked Lady Macbeth had

made these two watchmen drink a great deal of wine, and had, besides, put some drugs into the liquor; so that when they went to the king's apartment they both fell asleep, and slept so soundly that nothing could awaken them.

Then the cruel Macbeth came into King Duncan's bedroom about two in the morning. It was a terribly stormy night; but the noise of the wind and of the thunder did not awaken the king, for he was old, and weary with his journey. Neither could it awaken the two sentinels, who were stupefied with the liquor and the drugs they had swallowed.

They all slept soundly. So Macbeth having come into the room and stepped gently over the floor, he took the two dirks which belonged to the sentinels, and stabbed poor old King Duncan to the heart, and that so effectually that he died without giving

even a groan. Then Macbeth put the bloody daggers into the hands of the sentinels, and daubed their faces over with blood, that it might appear as if they had committed the murder. Macbeth was, however, greatly frightened at what he had done; but his wife made him wash his hands and go to bed.

Early in the morning the nobles and gentlemen who attended on the king assembled in the great hall of the castle, and there they began to talk of what a dreadful storm it had been the night before. But Macbeth could scarcely understand what they said, for he was thinking of something much worse and more frightful than the storm, and was wondering what would be said when they heard of the murder.

They waited for some time, but finding the king did not come from his apartment, one of the noblemen went to see whether he

was well or not. But when he came into the room he found poor King Duncan lying stiff and cold and bloody, and the two sentinels both fast asleep, with their dirks or daggers covered with blood.

As soon as the Scottish nobles saw this terrible sight they were greatly astonished and enraged; and Macbeth made believe as if he were more enraged than any of them, and drawing his sword, before any one could prevent him, he killed the two attendants of the king who slept in the bedchamber, pretending to think they had been guilty of murdering King Duncan.

When Malcolm and Donaldbane, the two sons of the good king, saw their father slain in this strange manner within Macbeth's castle, they became afraid that they might be put to death likewise, and fled away out of Scotland; for, notwithstanding all the excuses which he could make, they still believed that Macbeth

Lady Macbeth and her Husband.

had killed their father. Donaldbane fled into some distant islands; but Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan, went to the court of England, where he begged for assistance from the English king to place him on the throne of Scotland as his father's successor.

In the meantime Macbeth took possession of the kingdom of Scotland, and thus all his wicked wishes seemed to be fulfilled. But he was not happy. He began to reflect how wicked he had been in killing his friend and benefactor, and how some other person as ambitious as he was himself might do the same thing to him. He remembered, too, that the old woman had said that the children of Banquo should succeed to the throne after his death, and therefore he concluded that Banquo might be tempted to conspire against him, as he had himself done against King Duncan. The wicked always think other people are as bad as themselves.

In order to prevent this supposed danger, Macbeth hired ruffians to watch in a wood, where Banquo and his son Fleance sometimes used to walk in the evening, with instructions to attack them, and kill both father and son. The villains did as they were ordered by Macbeth; but while they were killing Banquo, the boy Fleance made his escape from their wicked hands, and fled from Scotland into Wales. And it is said that, long afterwards, his children came to possess the Scottish crown.

Macbeth was not the more happy that he had slain his brave friend and cousin Banquo. He knew that men began to suspect the wicked deeds which he had done, and he was constantly afraid that some one would put him to death as he had done his old sovereign, or that Malcolm would obtain assistance from the King of England, and come to make war against him, and take

from him the Scottish kingdom. So, in this great perplexity of mind, he thought he would go to the old women whose words had first put into his mind the desire of becoming a king.

It is to be supposed that he offered them presents, and that they were cunning enough to study how to give him some answer which should make him continue in the belief that they could prophesy what was to happen in future times. So they answered to him that he should not be conquered or lose the crown of Scotland until a great forest called Birnam Wood should come to attack a strong castle situated on a high hill called Dunsinane, in which castle Macbeth commonly resided.

Now the hill of Dunsinane is upon the one side of a great valley, and the forest of Birnam is upon the other. There are twelve miles' distance between them; and besides that, Macbeth thought it was impossible

that the trees could ever come to the assault of the castle. He therefore resolved to fortify his castle on the hill of Dunsinane very strongly, as being a place in which he would always be sure to be safe. For this purpose he caused all his great nobility and thanes to send in stones and wood, and other things wanted in building, and to drag them with oxen up to the top of the steep hill where he was building the castle.

Now, among other nobles who were obliged to send oxen and horses and materials to this laborious work was one called Macduff, the Thane of Fife. Macbeth was afraid of this thane, for he was very powerful, and was accounted both brave and wise; and Macbeth thought he would most probably join with Prince Malcolm if ever he should come from England with an army.

The king, therefore, had a private hatred against the Thane of Fife, which he kept

concealed from all men until he should have some opportunity of putting him to death, as he had done Duncan and Banquo. Macduff, on his part, kept upon his guard, and went to the king's court as seldom as he could, thinking himself never safe unless he was in his own castle of Kennoway, which is on the coast of Fife, near to the mouth of the Firth of Forth.

It happened, however, that the king had summoned several of his nobles, and Macduff, the Thane of Fife, amongst others, to attend him at his new castle of Dunsinane; and they were all obliged to come—none dared stay behind. Now the king was to give the nobles a great entertainment, and preparations were made for it.

In the meantime Macbeth rode out, with a few attendants, to see the oxen drag the wood and the stones up the hill, for enlarging and strengthening the castle. So they

saw most of the oxen trudging up the hill with great difficulty (for the ascent is very steep), and the burdens were heavy, and the weather was extremely hot.

At length Macbeth saw a pair of oxen so tired that they could go no farther up the hill, but fell down under their load. Then the king was very angry, and demanded to know who it was among his thanes that had sent oxen so weak and so unfit for labour when he had so much work for them to do. Some one replied that the oxen belonged to Macduff, the Thane of Fife. "Then," said the king, in great anger, "since the Thane of Fife sends such worthless cattle as these to do my labour, I will put his own neck into the yoke, and make him drag the burdens himself."

There was a friend of Macduff who heard these angry expressions of the king, and hastened to communicate them to the Thane

of Fife, who was walking in the hall of the king's castle while dinner was preparing. The instant that Macduff heard what the king had said, he knew he had no time to lose in making his escape; for whenever Macbeth threatened to do mischief to any one, he was sure to keep his word.

So Macduff snatched up from the table a loaf of bread, called for his horses and his servants, and was galloping back to his own province of Fife before Macbeth and the rest of the nobility were returned to the castle. The first question which the king asked was, What had become of Macduff? And being informed that he had fled from Dunsinane, he ordered a body of his guards to attend him, and mounted on horseback himself to pursue the thane, with the purpose of putting him to death.

Macduff, in the meantime, fled as fast as horses' feet could carry him; but he was so

ill provided with money for his expenses that, when he came to the great ferry over the river Tay, he had nothing to give to the boatmen who took him across excepting the loaf of bread which he had taken from the king's table. The place was called for a long time afterwards the Ferry of the Loaf.

When Macduff got into his province of Fife, which is on the other side of the Tay, he rode on faster than before, towards his own castle of Kennoway, which, as I told you, stands close by the seaside; and when he reached it, the king and his guards were not far behind him.

Macduff ordered his wife to shut the gates of the castle, draw up the drawbridge, and on no account to permit the king or any of his soldiers to enter. In the meantime he went to the small harbour belonging to the castle, and caused a ship which was lying

there to be fitted out for sea in all haste, and got on board himself in order to escape from Macbeth.

In the meantime Macbeth summoned the lady to surrender the castle, and to deliver up her husband. But Lady Macduff, who was a wise and a brave woman, made many excuses and delays, until she knew that her husband was safely on board the ship and had sailed from the harbour. Then she spoke boldly from the wall of the castle to the king, who was standing before the gate still demanding entrance, with many threats of what he would do if Macduff was not given up to him.

"Do you see," she said, "yon white sail upon the sea? Yonder goes Macduff to the court of England. You will never see him again till he comes back with young Prince Malcolm to pull you down from the throne, and to put you to death. You will never be

able to put your yoke, as you threatened, on the Thane of Fife's neck."

Some say that Macbeth was so much incensed at this bold answer that he and his guards attacked the castle and took it, killing the brave lady and all whom they found there. But others say, and I believe more truly, that the king, seeing that the fortress of Kennoway was very strong, and that Macduff had escaped from him and was embarked for England, departed back to Dunsinane without attempting to take the castle. The ruins are still to be seen, and are called the Thane's Castle.

There reigned at that time in England a very good king, called Edward the Confessor. I told you that Prince Malcolm, the son of Duncan, was at his court, soliciting assistance to recover the Scottish throne. The arrival of Macduff greatly aided the success of his petition, for the English king

knew that Macduff was a brave and a wise man. As he assured Edward that the Scots were tired of the cruel Macbeth, and would join Prince Malcolm if he were to return to his country at the head of an army, the king ordered a great warrior called Siward, Earl of Northumberland, to enter Scotland with a large force and assist Prince Malcolm in the recovery of his father's crown.

Then it happened just as Macduff had said, for the Scottish thanes and nobles would not fight for Macbeth, but joined Prince Malcolm and Macduff against him; so that at length he shut himself up in his castle of Dunsinane, where he thought himself safe, according to the old women's prophecy, until Birnam Wood should come against him.

He boasted of this to his followers, and encouraged them to make a valiant defence, assuring them of certain victory. At this

time Malcolm and Macduff were come as far as Birnam Wood, and lay encamped there with their army. The next morning, when they were to march across the broad valley to attack the castle of Dunsinane, Macduff advised that every soldier should cut down a bough of a tree and carry it in his hand, that the enemy might not be able to see how many men were coming against them.

Now the sentinel who stood on Macbeth's castle wall, when he saw all these branches which the soldiers of Prince Malcolm carried, ran to the king, and informed him that the wood of Birnam was moving towards the castle of Dunsinane. The king at first called him a liar, and threatened to put him to death; but when he looked from the walls himself, and saw the appearance of a forest approaching from Birnam, he knew the hour of his destruction was come. His followers,

too, began to be disheartened, and to fly from the castle, seeing their master had lost all hopes.

Macbeth, however, recollected his own bravery, and sallied desperately out at the head of the few followers who remained faithful to him. He was killed, after a furious resistance, fighting hand to hand with Macduff in the thick of the battle. Prince Malcolm mounted the throne of Scotland, and reigned long and prosperously. He rewarded Macduff by declaring that his descendants should lead the vanguard of the Scottish army in battle, and place the crown on the king's head at the ceremony of coronation. King Malcolm also created the thanes of Scotland earls, after the title of dignity adopted in the court of England.

THE STORY OF WILLIAM WALLACE.

WILLIAM WALLACE was none of the high nobles of Scotland, but the son of a private gentleman, called Wallace of Ellerslie, in Renfrewshire, near Paisley. He was very tall and handsome, and one of the strongest and bravest men that ever lived. He had a very fine countenance, with a quantity of fair hair, and was particularly dexterous in the use of all weapons which were then employed in battle.

Wallace, like all Scotsmen of high spirit, had looked with great indignation upon the usurpation of the crown by Edward the First of England, and upon the insolences

which the English soldiers committed on his countrymen. It is said that when he was very young he went a-fishing for sport in the river of Irvine, near Ayr. He had caught a good many trout, which were carried by a boy, who attended him with a fishing-basket, as is usual with anglers. Two or three English soldiers, who belonged to the garrison of Ayr, came up to Wallace, and insisted, with their usual insolence, on taking the fish from the boy.

Wallace was contented to allow them a part of the trout, but he refused to part with the whole basketful. The soldiers insisted, and from words came to blows. Wallace had no better weapon than the butt-end of his fishing-rod; but he struck the foremost of the Englishmen so hard under the ear with it that he killed him on the spot, and getting possession of the slain man's sword, he fought with so much fury

that he put the others to flight, and brought home his fish safe and sound.

The English governor of Ayr sought for him, to punish him with death for this action; but Wallace lay concealed among the hills and great woods till the matter was forgotten, and then appeared in another part of the country. He is said to have had other adventures of the same kind, in which he gallantly defended himself, sometimes when alone, sometimes with very few companions, against superior numbers of the English, until at last his name became generally known as a terror to them.

But the action which occasioned his finally rising in arms is believed to have happened in the town of Lanark. Wallace was at this time married to a lady of that place, and residing there with his wife. It chanced, as he walked in the market-place, dressed in a green garment, with a rich dagger by his

side, that an Englishman came up and insulted him on account of his finery, saying a Scotsman had no business to wear so gay a dress or carry so handsome a weapon.

It soon came to a quarrel, as on many former occasions; and Wallace, having killed the Englishman, fled to his own house, which was speedily assaulted by all the English soldiers. While they were endeavouring to force their way in at the front of the house, Wallace escaped by a back-door, and got in safety to a rugged and rocky glen, near Lanark, called the Cartland crags, all covered with bushes and trees, and full of high precipices, where he knew he should be safe from the pursuit of the English soldiers.

In the meantime the governor of Lanark, whose name was Hazelrigg, burned Wallace's house, and put his wife and servants to death; and by committing this cruelty increased to the highest pitch, as you may well believe,

the hatred which the champion had always borne against the English usurper. Hazelrigg also proclaimed Wallace an outlaw, and offered a reward to any one who should bring him to an English garrison, alive or dead.

On the other hand, Wallace soon collected a body of men, outlawed like himself, or willing to become so, rather than any longer endure the oppression of the English. One of his earliest expeditions was directed against Hazelrigg, whom he killed, and thus avenged the death of his wife.

He fought skirmishes with the soldiers who were sent against him, and often defeated them; and in time became so well known and so formidable that multitudes began to resort to his standard, until at length he was at the head of a considerable army, with which he proposed to restore his country to independence.

About this time is said to have taken place a memorable event, which the Scottish people called the *Barns of Ayr*. It is alleged that the English governor of Ayr had invited the greater part of the Scottish nobility and gentry in the western parts to meet him at some large buildings called the barns of Ayr, for the purpose of friendly conference upon the affairs of the nation. But the English earl entertained the treacherous purpose of putting the Scottish gentlemen to death.

The English soldiers had halters with running nooses ready prepared, and hung upon the beams which supported the roof; and as the Scottish gentlemen were admitted by two and two at a time, the nooses were thrown over their heads, and they were pulled up by the neck, and thus hanged or strangled to death. Among those who were slain in this base and treacherous manner was,

it is said, Sir Reginald Crawford, Sheriff of the County of Ayr, and uncle to William Wallace.

When Wallace heard of what had befallen, he was dreadfully enraged, and collecting his men in a wood near the town of Ayr, he resolved to be revenged on the authors of this great crime. The English in the meanwhile made much feasting, and when they had eaten and drunk plentifully they lay down to sleep in the same large barns in which they had murdered the Scottish gentlemen. But Wallace, learning that they kept no guard or watch, not suspecting there were any enemies so near them, directed a woman who knew the place to mark with chalk the doors of the lodgings where the Englishmen lay. Then he sent a party of men, who, with strong ropes, made all the doors so fast on the outside that those within could not open them.

On the outside the Scots had prepared heaps of straw, to which they set fire, and the barns of Ayr, being themselves made of wood, were soon burning in a bright flame. Then the English were awakened, and endeavoured to get out to save their lives. But the doors, as I told you, were secured on the outside, and bound fast with ropes; and, besides, the blazing houses were surrounded by the Scots, who forced those who got out to run back into the fire, or else put them to death on the spot; and thus great numbers perished miserably.

Many of the English were lodged in a convent, but they had no better fortune than the others; for the prior of the convent caused all the friars to arm themselves, and attacking the English guests, they put most of them to the sword. This was called the "Friar of Ayr's Blessing." We cannot tell if this story of the *Barns of Ayr* be exactly

true; but it is probable there is some foundation for it, as it is universally believed in that country.

Thus Wallace's party grew daily stronger and stronger, and many of the Scottish nobles joined with him. Among these was Sir William Douglas, the head of a great family often mentioned in Scottish history. There was also Sir John the Grahame, who became Wallace's bosom friend and greatest confidant. Many of these great noblemen, however, deserted the cause of the country on the approach of John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, the English governor, at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army.

They thought that Wallace would be unable to withstand the attack of so many disciplined soldiers, and hastened to submit themselves to the English, for fear of losing their estates. Wallace, however, remained undismayed, and at the head of a considerable

army. He had taken up his camp upon the northern side of the river Forth, near the town of Stirling. The river was there crossed by a long wooden bridge, about a mile above the spot where the present bridge is situated.

The English general approached the banks of the river on the southern side. He sent two clergymen to offer a pardon to Wallace and his followers, on condition that they should lay down their arms. But such was not the purpose of the high-minded champion of Scotland.

"Go back to Warenne," said Wallace, "and tell him we value not the pardon of the King of England. We are not here for the purpose of treating of peace, but of abiding battle, and restoring freedom to our country. Let the English come on; we defy them to their very beards!"

The English, upon hearing this haughty answer, called loudly to be led to the attack.

Their leader, Sir Richard Lundin, a Scottish knight, who had gone over to the enemy at Irvine, hesitated; for he was a skilful soldier, and he saw that, to approach the Scottish army, his troops must pass over the long, narrow wooden bridge; so that those who should get over first might be attacked by Wallace with all his forces, before those who remained behind could possibly come to their assistance.

He therefore inclined to delay the battle. But Cressingham, the treasurer, who was ignorant and presumptuous, insisted that it was their duty to fight, and put an end to the war at once; and Lundin gave way to his opinion, although Cressingham, being a churchman, could not be so good a judge of what was fitting as he himself, an experienced officer.

The English army began to cross the bridge, Cressingham leading the van, or fore-

most division of the army; for in those military days even clergymen wore armour and fought in battle. That took place which Sir Richard Lundin had foreseen. Wallace suffered a considerable part of the English army to pass the bridge, without offering any opposition; but when about one-half were over, and the bridge was crowded with those who were following, he charged those who had crossed with his whole strength, slew a very great number, and drove the rest into the river Forth, where the greater part were drowned. The remainder of the English army, who were left on the southern bank of the river, fled in great confusion, having first set fire to the wooden bridge, that the Scots might not pursue them.

Cressingham was killed in the very beginning of the battle; and the Scots detested him so much that they flayed the skin from his dead body, and kept pieces of it, in

memory of the revenge they had taken upon the English treasurer. Some say they made saddle-girths of this same skin; a purpose for which I do not think it could be very fit. It must be owned to have been a dishonourable thing of the Scots to insult thus the dead body of their enemy, and shows that they must have been then a ferocious and barbarous people.

The remains of Surrey's great army fled out of Scotland after this defeat; and the Scots, taking arms on all sides, attacked the castles in which the English soldiers continued to shelter themselves, and took most of them by force or stratagem.

Many wonderful stories are told of Wallace's exploits on these occasions, some of which are no doubt true, while others are either invented or very much exaggerated. It seems certain, however, that he defeated the English in several combats, chased them

almost entirely out of Scotland, regained the towns and castles of which they had possessed themselves, and recovered for a time the complete freedom of the country.

He even marched into England, and laid Cumberland and Northumberland waste, where the Scottish soldiers, in revenge for the mischief which the English had done in their country, committed great cruelties. Wallace did not approve of their killing the people who were not in arms, and he endeavoured to protect the clergymen and others who were not able to defend themselves. "Remain with me," he said to the priests of Hexham, a large town in Northumberland, "for I cannot protect you from my soldiers when you are out of my presence."

The troops who followed Wallace received no pay, because he had no money to give them; and that was one great reason why he could not keep them under restraint, or

prevent their doing much harm to the defenceless country people. He remained in England more than three weeks, and did a great deal of mischief to the country. Indeed, it appears that, though Wallace disapproved of slaying priests, women, and children, he partook of the ferocity of the times so much as to put to death without quarter all whom he found in arms.

In the north of Scotland the English had placed a garrison in the strong castle of Dunnottar, which, built on a large and precipitous rock, overhangs the raging sea. Though the place is almost inaccessible, Wallace and his followers found their way into the castle; while the garrison in great terror fled into the church or chapel, which was built on the very verge of the precipice.

This did not save them, for Wallace caused the church to be set on fire. The terrified garrison, involved in the flames, ran some of

them upon the points of the Scottish swords, while others threw themselves from the precipice into the sea, and swam along to the cliffs, where they hung like sea-fowl, screaming in vain for mercy and assistance.

The followers of Wallace were frightened at this dreadful scene, and falling on their knees before the priests who chanced to be in the army, they asked forgiveness for having committed so much slaughter within the limits of a church dedicated to the service of God. But Wallace had so deep a sense of the injuries which the English had done to his country, that he only laughed at the contrition of his soldiers. "I will absolve you all myself," he said. "Are you Scottish soldiers, and do you repent for a trifle like this, which is not half what the invaders deserved at our hands?" So deep-seated was Wallace's feeling of national resentment that it seems to have overcome, in such instances,

the scruples of a temper which was naturally humane.

Edward the First was in Flanders when all these events took place. You may suppose he was very angry when he learned that Scotland, which he thought completely subdued, had risen into a great insurrection against him, defeated his armies, killed his treasurer, chased his soldiers out of their country, and invaded England with a great force. He came back from Flanders in a mighty rage, and determined not to leave the rebellious country until it was finally conquered; for which purpose he assembled a very fine army, and marched into Scotland.

In the meantime the Scots prepared to defend themselves, and chose Wallace to be Governor, or Protector, of the kingdom, because they had no king at the time. He was now titled Sir William Wallace, Protector, or Governor, of the Scottish nation.

But although Wallace, as we have seen, was the best soldier and bravest man in Scotland, and therefore the most fit to be placed in command at this critical period, when the King of England was coming against them with such great forces, yet the nobles of Scotland envied him this important situation, because he was not a man born in high rank or enjoying a large estate.

So great was their jealousy of Sir William Wallace that many of these great barons did not seem very willing to bring forward their forces, or fight against the English, because they would not have a man of inferior condition to be general. This was base and mean conduct, and it was attended with great disasters to Scotland. Yet, notwithstanding this unwillingness of the great nobility to support him, Wallace assembled a large army ; for the middling, but especially the lower classes, were very much

attached to him. He marched boldly against the King of England, and met him near the town of Falkirk.

Most of the Scottish army were on foot, because in those days only the nobility and great men of Scotland fought on horseback. The English king, on the contrary, had a very large body of the finest cavalry in the world, Normans and English, all clothed in complete armour. He had also the celebrated archers of England, each of whom was said to carry twelve Scotsmen's lives under his girdle; because every archer had twelve arrows stuck in his belt, and was expected to kill a man with every arrow.

The Scots had some good archers from the Forest of Ettrick, who fought under command of Sir John Stewart of Bonkill; but they were not nearly equal in number to the English. The greater part of the Scottish army were on foot, armed with long

spears; they were placed thick and close together, and laid all their spears so close, point over point, that it seemed as difficult to break through them as through the wall of a strong castle.

When the two armies were drawn up facing each other, Wallace said to his soldiers, "I have brought you to the ring; let me see how you can dance"—meaning, I have brought you to the decisive field of battle; let me see how bravely you can fight.

The English made the attack. King Edward, though he saw the close ranks and undaunted appearance of the Scottish infantry, resolved nevertheless to try whether he could not ride them down with his fine cavalry. He therefore gave his horsemen orders to advance. They charged accordingly at full gallop. It must have been a terrible thing to have seen these fine horses riding as hard as they could against the long

lances which were held out by the Scots to keep them back; and a dreadful cry arose when they came against each other.

The first line of cavalry was commanded by the Earl Marshal of England, whose progress was checked by a morass. The second line of English horse was commanded by Antony Beck, the Bishop of Durham, who nevertheless wore armour, and fought like a lay baron. He wheeled round the morass; but when he saw the deep and firm order of the Scots, his heart failed, and he proposed to Sir Ralph Basset of Drayton, who commanded under him, to halt till Edward himself brought up the reserve.

"Go say your mass, bishop," answered Basset contemptuously, and advanced at full gallop with the second line. However, the Scots stood their ground with their long spears; many of the foremost of the English horses were thrown down, and the riders were

killed as they lay rolling, unable to rise, owing to the weight of their heavy armour. But the Scottish horse did not come to the assistance of their infantry, but, on the contrary, fled away from the battle.

It is supposed that this was owing to the treachery or ill-will of the nobility, who were jealous of Wallace. But it must be considered that the Scottish cavalry were few in number, and that they had much worse arms and weaker horses than their enemies. The English cavalry attempted again and again to disperse the deep and solid ranks in which Wallace had stationed his foot soldiers. But they were repeatedly beaten off with loss, nor could they make their way through the wood of spears, as it is called by one of the English historians.

King Edward then commanded his archers to advance; and these approached within arrow-shot of the Scottish ranks, poured

on them such close and dreadful volleys of arrows that it was impossible to sustain the discharge. It happened, at the same time, that Sir John Stewart was killed by a fall from his horse; and the archers of Ettrick Forest, whom he was bringing forward to oppose those of King Edward, were slain in great numbers around him. Their bodies were afterwards distinguished among the slain, as being the tallest and handsomest men of the army.

The Scottish spearmen being thus thrown into some degree of confusion by the loss of those who were slain by the arrows of the English, the heavy cavalry of Edward again charged with more success than formerly, and broke through the ranks, which were already disordered. Sir John Grahame, Wallace's great friend and companion, was slain, with many other brave soldiers; and the Scots, having lost a very

great number of men, were at length obliged to take to flight.

This fatal battle was fought upon July 22, 1298. Sir John the Grahame lies buried in the churchyard of Falkirk. A tombstone was laid over him, which has been three times renewed since his death. The inscription bears, "That Sir John the Grahame, equally remarkable for wisdom and courage, and the faithful friend of Wallace, being slain in battle by the English, lies buried in this place." A large oak tree in the adjoining forest was long shown as marking the spot where Wallace slept before the battle, or, as others said, in which he hid himself after the defeat.

After this fatal defeat of Falkirk Sir William Wallace seems to have resigned his office of Governor of Scotland. Several nobles were named guardians in his place, and continued to make resistance to the

English armies; and they gained some advantages, particularly near Roslin, where a body of Scots, commanded by John Comyn of Badenoch, who was one of the guardians of the kingdom, and another distinguished commander, called Simon Fraser, defeated three armies or detachments of English in one day.

Nevertheless, the King of England possessed so much wealth, and so many means of raising soldiers, that he sent army after army into Scotland, and obliged all its nobles and great men, one after another, to submit themselves once more to his yoke.

Sir William Wallace alone, or with a very small band of followers, refused either to acknowledge the usurper Edward or to lay down his arms. He continued to maintain himself among the woods and mountains of his native country for no less than seven years after his defeat at Falkirk, and for

more than one year after all the other defenders of Scottish liberty had laid down their arms. Many proclamations were sent out against him by the English, and a great reward was set upon his head; for Edward did not think he could have any secure possession of his usurped kingdom of Scotland while Wallace lived.

At length he was taken prisoner; and, shame it is to say, a Scotsman, called Sir John Menteith, was the person by whom he was seized and delivered to the English. It is generally said that he was made prisoner at Robroyston, near Glasgow; and the tradition of the country bears that the signal made for rushing upon him and taking him unawares was, when one of his pretended friends, who betrayed him, should turn a loaf, which was placed on the table, with its bottom or flat side uppermost. And in after times it was reckoned

ill-breeding to turn a loaf in that manner if there was a person named Menteith in company, since it was as much as to remind him that his namesake had betrayed Sir William Wallace, the Champion of Scotland.

Edward having thus obtained possession of the person whom he considered as the greatest obstacle to his complete conquest of Scotland, resolved to make Wallace an example to all Scottish patriots who should in future venture to oppose his ambitious projects.

He caused this gallant defender of his country to be brought to trial in Westminster Hall, before the English judges, and produced him there, crowned, in mockery, with a green garland, because they said he had been king of outlaws and robbers among the Scottish woods.

Wallace was accused of having been a

traitor to the English crown; to which he answered, "I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject." He was then charged with having taken and burnt towns and castles, with having killed many men, and done much violence. He replied, with the same calm resolution, "that it was true he had killed very many Englishmen, but it was because they had come to subdue and oppress his native country of Scotland; and far from repenting what he had done, he declared he was only sorry that he had not put to death many more of them."

Notwithstanding that Wallace's defence was a good one, both in law and in common sense, the English judges condemned him to be executed.

THE ADVENTURES OF BRUCE.

ROBERT THE BRUCE was a remarkably brave and strong man—there was no man in Scotland that was thought a match for him except Sir William Wallace; and now that Wallace was dead, Bruce was held the best warrior in Scotland.

He was very wise and prudent, and an excellent general—that is, he knew how to conduct an army and place them in order for battle as well as, or better than, any great man of his time. He was generous too, and courteous by nature; but he had some faults which perhaps belonged as much to the fierce period in which he lived as to his own character. He was rash and passionate, and

in his passion he was sometimes relentless and cruel.

Robert the Bruce had fixed his purpose to attempt to drive the English out of Scotland, and he desired to prevail upon Sir John the Red Comyn, who was his rival in his pretensions to the throne, to join with him in expelling the foreign enemy by their common efforts.

With this purpose Bruce posted down from London to Dumfries, on the borders of Scotland, and requested an interview with John Comyn. They met in the church of the Minorites in that town, before the high altar. What passed betwixt them is not known with certainty, but they quarrelled either concerning their mutual pretensions to the crown or because Comyn refused to join Bruce in the proposed insurrection against the English; or, as many writers say, because Bruce charged Comyn with having betrayed

to the English his purpose of rising up against King Edward.

It is, however, certain that these two haughty barons came to high and abusive words, until at length Bruce, who I told you was extremely passionate, forgot the sacred character of the place in which they stood, and struck Comyn a blow with his dagger. Having done this rash deed, he instantly ran out of the church and called for his horse. Two gentlemen of the country, Lindesay and Kirkpatrick, friends of Bruce, were then in attendance on him. Seeing him pale, bloody, and in much agitation, they eagerly inquired what was the matter.

"I doubt," said Bruce, "that I have slain the Red Comyn."

"Do you leave such a matter in doubt?" said Kirkpatrick. "I will make sicker!"—that is, I will make certain.

Accordingly he and his companion, Linde-

say, rushed into the church, and made the matter certain with a vengeance by dispatching the wounded Comyn with their daggers. His uncle, Sir Robert Comyn, was slain at the same time.

This slaughter of Comyn was a rash and cruel action, and the historian of Bruce observes that it was followed by the displeasure of Heaven; for no man ever went through more misfortunes than Robert Bruce, although he at length rose to great honour.

After the deed was done Bruce might be called desperate. He had committed an action which was sure to bring down upon him the vengeance of all Comyn's relations, the resentment of the King of England, and the displeasure of the Church on account of having slain his enemy within consecrated ground. He determined, therefore, to bid them all defiance at once, and to assert his pretensions to the throne of Scotland. He

drew his own followers together, summoned to meet him such barons as still entertained hopes of the freedom of the country, and was crowned king at the abbey of Scone, the usual place where the kings of Scotland assumed their authority.

Everything relating to the ceremony was hastily performed. A small circlet of gold was hurriedly made, to represent the ancient crown of Scotland which Edward had carried off to England. The Earl of Fife, descendant of the brave Macduff, whose duty it was to have placed the crown on the king's head, would not give his attendance. But the ceremonial was performed by his sister, Isabella, Countess of Buchan, though without the consent either of her brother or husband. A few barons, whose names ought to be dear to their country, joined Bruce in his attempt to vindicate the independence of Scotland.

Edward was dreadfully incensed when he heard that, after all the pains which he had taken and all the blood which had been spilled, the Scots were making this new attempt to shake off his authority. Though now old, feeble, and sickly, he made a solemn vow at a great festival, in presence of all his court, that he would take the most ample vengeance upon Robert the Bruce and his adherents, after which he would never again draw his sword upon a Christian, but would only fight against the unbelieving Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Land. He marched against Bruce, accordingly, at the head of a powerful army.

The commencement of Bruce's undertaking was most disastrous. He was crowned on 29th March 1306. On the 18th May he was excommunicated by the Pope, on account of the murder of Comyn within consecrated ground—a sentence which excluded him from

all the benefits of religion, and authorized any one to kill him. Finally, on the 19th June the new king was completely defeated near Methven by the English Earl of Pembroke.

Robert's horse was killed under him in the action, and he was for a moment a prisoner. But he had fallen into the power of a Scottish knight, who, though he served in the English army, did not choose to be the instrument of putting Bruce into their hands, and allowed him to escape. The conquerors executed their prisoners with their usual cruelty.

Bruce, with a few brave adherents, among whom was the young Lord of Douglas, who was afterwards called the Good Lord James, retired into the Highland mountains, where they were chased from one place of refuge to another, often in great danger, and suffering many hardships. The Bruce's wife, now Queen of Scotland, with several other ladies,

accompanied her husband and his few followers during their wanderings. There was no other way of providing for them save by hunting and fishing. It was remarked that Douglas was the most active and successful in procuring for the unfortunate ladies such supplies as his dexterity in fishing or in killing deer could furnish to them.

Driven from one place in the Highlands to another, starved out of some districts, and forced from others by the opposition of the inhabitants, Bruce attempted to force his way into Lorn; but he found enemies everywhere. The M'Dougals, a powerful family, then called Lords of Lorn, were friendly to the English, and, putting their men in arms, attacked Bruce and his wandering companions as soon as they attempted to enter their territory.

The chief of these M'Dougals, called John

of Lorn, hated Bruce on account of his having slain the Red Comyn in the church at Dumfries; to whom this M'Dougal was nearly related. Bruce was again defeated by this chief, through force of numbers, at a place called Dalry; but he showed, amidst his misfortunes, the greatness of his strength and courage. He directed his men to retreat through a narrow pass, and placing himself last of the party, he fought with and slew such of the enemy as attempted to press hard on them.

Three followers of M'Dougal, a father and two sons, called M'Androsser, all very strong men, when they saw Bruce thus protecting the retreat of his followers, made a vow that they would either kill this redoubted champion or make him prisoner.

The whole three rushed on the king at once. Bruce was on horseback, in the strait pass we have described, betwixt a precipi-

tous rock and a deep lake. He struck the first man, who came up and seized his horse's rein, such a blow with his sword as cut off his hand and freed the bridle. The man bled to death.

The other brother had grasped Bruce in the meantime by the leg, and was attempting to throw him from horseback. The king, setting spurs to his horse, made the animal suddenly spring forward, so that the Highlander fell under the horse's feet; and as he was endeavouring to rise again, Bruce cleft his head in two with his sword.

The father, seeing his two sons thus slain, flew desperately at the king, and grasped him by the mantle so close to his body that he could not have room to wield his long sword. But with the heavy pommel of that weapon, or, as others say, with an iron hammer which hung at his saddle-bow, the king struck this third assailant

so dreadful a blow that he dashed out his brains. Still, however, the Highlander kept his dying grasp on the king's mantle; so that, to be free of the dead body, Bruce was obliged to undo the brooch, or clasp, by which it was fastened, and leave that, and the mantle itself, behind him.

The brooch, which fell thus into the possession of M'Dougal of Lorn, is still preserved in that ancient family, as a memorial that the celebrated Robert Bruce once narrowly escaped falling into the hands of their ancestor. Robert greatly resented this attack upon him, and when he was in happier circumstances, did not fail to take his revenge on M'Dougal, or, as he is usually called, John of Lorn.

The king met with many such encounters amidst his dangerous and dismal wanderings; yet, though almost always defeated by the superior numbers of the English, and of

such Scots as sided with them, he still kept up his own spirits and those of his followers. He was a better scholar than was usual in those days, when, except clergymen, few people learned to read and write. But King Robert could do both very well; and we are told that he sometimes read aloud to his companions, to amuse them when they were crossing the great Highland lakes in such wretched leaky boats as they could find for that purpose.

At last dangers increased so much around the brave King Robert that he was obliged to separate himself from his queen and her ladies; for the winter was coming on, and it would be impossible for the women to endure this wandering sort of life when the frost and snow should set in. So Bruce left his queen, with the Countess of Buchan and others, in the only castle which remained to him, which was called Kildrummie, and is

situated near the head of the river Don in Aberdeenshire. The king also left his youngest brother, Nigel Bruce, to defend the castle against the English; and he himself, with his second brother, Edward, who was a very brave man, but still more rash and passionate than Robert himself, went over to an island called Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, where Bruce and the few men that followed his fortunes passed the winter of 1306.

In the meantime ill luck seemed to pursue all his friends in Scotland. The castle of Kildrummie was taken by the English, and Nigel Bruce, a beautiful and brave youth, was cruelly put to death by the victors. The ladies who had attended on Robert's queen, as well as the queen herself, and the Countess of Buchan, were thrown into strict confinement, and treated with the utmost severity.

The Countess of Buchan had given Edward great offence by being the person who placed the crown on the head of Robert Bruce. She was imprisoned within the castle of Berwick, in a cage made on purpose. Some Scottish authors have pretended that this cage was hung over the walls with the poor countess, like a parrot's cage out at a window. But this is their own ignorant idea. The cage of the Lady Buchan was a strong wooden and iron piece of framework, placed within an apartment, and resembling one of those places in which wild beasts are confined. There were such cages in most old prisons to which captives were consigned, who, either for mutiny or for any other reason, were to be confined with peculiar rigour.

The news of the taking of Kildrummie, the captivity of his wife, and the execution of his brother, reached Bruce while he was residing in a miserable dwelling at

Rachrin, and reduced him to the point of despair.

It was about this time that an incident took place which, although it rests only on tradition in families of the name of Bruce, is rendered probable by the manners of the time. After receiving the last unpleasing intelligence from Scotland, Bruce was lying one morning on his wretched bed, and deliberating with himself whether he had not better resign all thoughts of again attempting to make good his right to the Scottish crown, and, dismissing his followers, transport himself and his brothers to the Holy Land, and spend the rest of his life in fighting against the Saracens; by which he thought, perhaps, he might deserve the forgiveness of Heaven for the great sin of stabbing Comyn in the church at Dumfries. But then, on the other hand, he thought it would be both criminal and

cowardly to give up his attempts to restore freedom to Scotland while there yet remained the least chance of his being successful in an undertaking which, rightly considered, was much more his duty than to drive the infidels out of Palestine, though the superstition of his age might think otherwise.

While he was divided betwixt these reflections and doubtful of what he should do, Bruce was looking upward to the roof of the cabin in which he lay; and his eye was attracted by a spider, which, hanging at the end of a long thread of its own spinning, was endeavouring, as is the fashion of that creature, to swing itself from one beam in the roof to another, for the purpose of fixing the line on which it meant to stretch its web.

The insect made the attempt again and again without success; and at length Bruce

counted that it had tried to carry its point six times, and been as often unable to do so. It came into his head that he had himself fought just six battles against the English and their allies, and that the poor persevering spider was exactly in the same situation with himself, having made as many trials, and been as often disappointed in what it aimed at.

"Now," thought Bruce, "as I have no means of knowing what is best to be done, I will be guided by the luck which shall attend this spider. If the insect shall make another effort to fix its thread, and shall be successful, I will venture a seventh time to try my fortune in Scotland; but if the spider shall fail, I will go to the wars in Palestine, and never return to my native country more."

While Bruce was forming this resolution, the spider made another exertion with all the force it could muster, and fairly succeeded in fastening its thread to the beam which

it had so often in vain attempted to reach. Bruce, seeing the success of the spider, resolved to try his own fortune; and as he had never before gained a victory, so he never afterwards sustained any considerable or decisive check or defeat.

I have often met with people of the name of Bruce so completely persuaded of the truth of this story that they would not on any account kill a spider, because it was that insect which had shown the example of perseverance, and given a signal of good luck to their great namesake.

Having determined to renew his efforts to obtain possession of Scotland, notwithstanding the smallness of the means which he had for accomplishing so great a purpose, the Bruce removed himself and his followers from Rachrin to the island of Arran, which lies in the mouth of the Clyde.

The king landed, and inquired of the first

woman he met what armed men were in the island. She returned for answer that there had arrived there very lately a body of armed strangers, who had defeated an English officer, the governor of the castle of Brathwick, had killed him and most of his men, and were now amusing themselves with hunting about the island.

The king, having caused himself to be guided to the woods which these strangers most frequented, there blew his horn repeatedly. Now, the chief of the strangers who had taken the castle was James Douglas, whom we have already mentioned as one of the best of Bruce's friends, and he was accompanied by some of the bravest of that patriotic band. When he heard Robert Bruce's horn he knew the sound well, and cried out that yonder was the king; he knew by his manner of blowing. So he and his companions hastened to meet King

Robert, and there was great joy on both sides; whilst at the same time they could not help weeping when they considered their own forlorn condition, and the great loss that had taken place among their friends since they had last parted. But they were stout-hearted men, and looked forward to freeing their country, in spite of all that had yet happened.

The Bruce was now within sight of Scotland, and not distant from his own family possessions, where the people were most likely to be attached to him. He began immediately to form plans with Douglas how they might best renew their enterprise against the English. The Douglas resolved to go disguised to his own country and raise his followers, in order to begin their enterprise by taking revenge on an English nobleman called Lord Clifford, upon whom Edward had conferred his estates, and who had taken up his residence in the castle of Douglas.

Bruce, on his part, opened a communication with the opposite coast of Carrick by means of one of his followers called Cuthbert. This person had directions that if he should find the countrymen in Carrick disposed to take up arms against the English, he was to make a fire on a headland, or lofty cape, called Turnberry, on the coast of Ayrshire, opposite to the island of Arran. The appearance of a fire on this place was to be a signal for Bruce to put to sea with such men as he had, who were not more than three hundred in number, for the purpose of landing in Carrick and joining the insurgents.

Bruce and his men watched eagerly for the signal, but for some time in vain. At length a fire on Turnberry Head became visible, and the king and his followers merrily betook themselves to their ships and galleys, concluding that their Carrick friends were all in arms, and ready to join with them. They

landed on the beach at midnight, where they found their spy Cuthbert alone in waiting for them with very bad news. Lord Percy, he said, was in the country with two or three hundred Englishmen, and had terrified the people so much, both by threats and actions, that none of them dared to think of rebelling against King Edward.

"Traitor!" said Bruce. "Why, then, did you make the signal?"

"Alas," replied Cuthbert, "the fire was not made by me, but by some other person, for what purpose I know not; but as soon as I saw it burning I knew that you would come over, thinking it my signal, and therefore I came down to wait for you on the beach, to tell you how the matter stood."

King Robert's first idea was to return to Arran after this disappointment; but his brother Edward refused to go back. He was, as I have told you, a man daring even

to rashness. "I will not leave my native land," he said, "now that I am so unexpectedly restored to it. I will give freedom to Scotland, or leave my carcass on the surface of the land which gave me birth."

Bruce also, after some hesitation, determined that since he had been thus brought to the mainland of Scotland, he would remain there, and take such adventure and fortune as Heaven should send him.

Accordingly he began to skirmish with the English so successfully as obliged the Lord Percy to quit Carrick. Bruce then dispersed his men upon various adventures against the enemy, in which they were generally successful. But then, on the other hand, the king, being left with small attendance, or sometimes almost alone, ran great risk of losing his life by treachery or by open violence. Several of these incidents are very interesting. I will tell you some of them.

(1+69)

Bruce and the Spider.

At one time a near relation of Bruce's, in whom he entirely confided, was induced by the bribes of the English to attempt to put him to death. This villain, with his two sons, watched the king one morning, till he saw him separated from all his men, excepting a little boy, who waited on him as a page. The father had a sword in his hand, one of the sons had a sword and a spear, the other had a sword and a battle-axe.

Now, when the king saw them so well armed when there were no enemies near, he began to call to mind some hints which had been given to him that these men intended to murder him. He had no weapons excepting his sword; but his page had a bow and arrow. He took them both from the little boy, and bade him stand at a distance; "for," said the king, "if I overcome these traitors, thou shalt have enough of weapons; but if I am slain by them, you may make your

escape, and tell Douglas and my brother to revenge my death." The boy was very sorry, for he loved his master; but he was obliged to do as he was bidden.

In the meantime the traitors came forward upon Bruce, that they might assault him at once. The king called out to them, and commanded them to come no nearer, upon peril of their lives; but the father answered with flattering words, pretending great kindness, and still continuing to approach his person. Then the king again called to them to stand. "Traitors," said he, "ye have sold my life for English gold; but you shall die if you come one foot nearer to me." With that he bent the page's bow; and as the old conspirator continued to advance, he let the arrow fly at him.

Bruce was an excellent archer; he aimed his arrow so well that it hit the father in the eye, and penetrated from that into his brain,

so that he fell down dead. Then the two sons rushed on the king. One of them fetched a blow at him with an axe, but missed his stroke and stumbled, so that the king with his great sword cut him down before he could recover his feet.

The remaining traitor ran on Bruce with his spear; but the king, with a sweep of his sword, cut the steel head off the villain's weapon, and then killed him before he had time to draw his sword. Then the little page came running, very joyful of his master's victory; and the king wiped his bloody sword, and looking upon the dead bodies, said, "These might have been reputed three gallant men, if they could have resisted the temptation of covetousness."

In the present day it is not necessary that generals or great officers should fight with their own hand, because it is only their duty to direct the movements and exertions

of their followers. The artillery and the soldiers shoot at the enemy; and men seldom mingle together and fight hand to hand. But in ancient times kings and great lords were obliged to put themselves into the very front of the battle, and fight like ordinary men, with the lance and other weapons. It was, therefore, of great consequence that they should be strong men and dexterous in the use of their arms. Robert Bruce was so remarkably active and powerful that he came through a great many personal dangers in which he must otherwise have been slain. I will tell you another of his adventures, which I think will amuse you.

After the death of the three traitors, Robert the Bruce continued to keep himself concealed in his own earldom of Carrick, and in the neighbouring country of Galloway, until he should have matters ready for a general attack upon the English. He was

obliged, in the meantime, to keep very few men with him, both for the sake of secrecy and from the difficulty of finding provisions.

Now, many of the people of Galloway were unfriendly to Bruce. They lived under the government of one M'Dougal, related to the Lord of Lorn, who, as I before told you, had defeated Bruce at Dalry, and very nearly killed or made him prisoner. These Galloway men had heard that Bruce was in their country, having no more than sixty men with him; so they resolved to attack him by surprise, and for this purpose they got two hundred men together, and brought with them two or three bloodhounds.

These animals were trained to chase a man by the scent of his footsteps, as fox-hounds chase a fox, or as beagles and harriers chase a hare. Although the dog does not see the person whose trace he is put upon, he follows him over every step he has taken.

At that time these bloodhounds, or sleuth-hounds (so called from *slot* or *sleut*, a word which signifies the scent left by an animal of chase), were used for the purpose of pursuing great criminals. The men of Galloway thought themselves secure that if they missed taking Bruce or killing him at the first onset, and if he should escape into the woods, they would find him out by means of these bloodhounds.

The good King Robert Bruce, who was always watchful and vigilant, had received some information of the intention of this party to come upon him suddenly and by night. Accordingly, he quartered his little troop of sixty men on the side of a deep and swift-running river that had very steep and rocky banks. There was but one ford by which this river could be crossed in that neighbourhood, and that ford was deep and narrow, so that two men could scarcely get

through abreast; the ground on which they were to land on the side where the king was, was steep, and the path which led upwards from the water's edge to the top of the bank extremely narrow and difficult.

Bruce caused his men to lie down to take some sleep, at a place about half a mile distant from the river; while he himself, with two attendants, went down to watch the ford, through which the enemy must needs pass before they could come to the place where King Robert's men were lying.

He stood for some time looking at the ford, and thinking how easily the enemy might be kept from passing there, providing it was bravely defended, when he heard at a distance the baying of a hound, which was always coming nearer and nearer. This was the bloodhound which was tracing the king's steps to the ford where he had crossed, and the two hundred Galloway

men were along with the animal and guided by it.

Bruce at first thought of going back to awaken his men; but then he reflected that it might be only some shepherd's dog. "My men," he said, "are sorely tired; I will not disturb their sleep for the yelping of a cur till I know something more of the matter." So he stood and listened; and by-and-by, as the cry of the hound came nearer, he began to hear a trampling of horses and the voices of men, and the ringing and clattering of armour, and then he was sure the enemy were coming to the river side.

Then the king thought, "If I go back to give my men the alarm, these Galloway men will get through the ford without opposition; and that would be a pity, since it is a place so advantageous to make defence against them." So he looked again at the steep path and the deep river, and he thought

that they gave him so much advantage that he himself could defend the passage with his own hand until his men came to assist him. His armour was so good and strong that he had no fear of arrows, and therefore the combat was not so very unequal as it must have otherwise been. He therefore sent his followers to waken his men, and remained alone by the bank of the river.

In the meanwhile the noise and trampling of the horses increased; and the moon being bright, Bruce beheld the glancing arms of about two hundred men, who came down to the opposite bank of the river. The men of Galloway, on their part, saw but one solitary figure guarding the ford, and the foremost of them plunged into the river without minding him. But as they could only pass the ford one by one, the Bruce, who stood high above them on the bank where they were to land, killed the foremost

man with a thrust of his long spear, and with a second thrust stabbed the horse, which fell down, kicking and plunging in his agonies, on the narrow path, and so prevented the others who were following from getting out of the river.

Bruce had thus an opportunity of dealing his blows at pleasure among them, while they could not strike at him again. In the confusion five or six of the enemy were slain, or, having been borne down the current, were drowned in the river. The rest were terrified, and drew back.

But when the Galloway men looked again and saw they were opposed by only one man, they themselves being so many, they cried out that their honour would be lost for ever if they did not force their way, and encouraged each other with loud cries to plunge through and assault him. But by this time the king's soldiers came up to his

assistance, and the Galloway men retreated, and gave up their enterprise.

I will tell you another story of this brave Robert Bruce during his wanderings. His adventures are as curious and entertaining as those which men invent for story books, with this advantage, that they are all true.

About the time when the Bruce was yet at the head of but few men, Sir Aymer de Valence, who was Earl of Pembroke, together with John of Lorn, came into Galloway, each of them being at the head of a large body of men. John of Lorn had a bloodhound with him which it was said had formerly belonged to Robert Bruce himself, and having been fed by the king with his own hands, it became attached to him, and would follow his footsteps anywhere, as dogs are well known to trace their master's steps, whether they be bloodhounds or not. By means of this hound John of Lorn thought he should certainly find

out Bruce, and take revenge on him for the death of his relation, Comyn.

When these two armies advanced upon King Robert, he at first thought of fighting with the English earl; but becoming aware that John of Lorn was moving round with another large body to attack him in the rear, he resolved to avoid fighting at that time, lest he should be oppressed by numbers.

For this purpose the king divided the men he had with him into three bodies, and commanded them to retreat by three different ways, thinking the enemy would not know which party to pursue. He also appointed a place at which they were to assemble again. But when John of Lorn came to the place where the army of Bruce had been thus divided, the bloodhound took his course after one of these divisions, neglecting the other two, and then John of Lorn knew that the king must be in that party; so he also made

no pursuit after the two other divisions of the Scots, but followed that which the dog pointed out, with all his men.

The king again saw that he was followed by a large body, and being determined to escape from them if possible, he made all the people who were with him disperse themselves different ways, thinking that thus the enemy must needs lose trace of him. He kept only one man along with him, and that was his own foster-brother, or the son of his nurse.

When John of Lorn came to the place where Bruce's companions had dispersed themselves, the bloodhound, after it had snuffed up and down for a little, quitted the footsteps of all the other fugitives, and ran barking upon the track of two men out of the whole number. Then John of Lorn knew that one of these two must needs be King Robert. Accordingly he

commanded five of his men that were speedy of foot to chase after him and either make him prisoner or slay him.

The Highlanders started off accordingly, and ran so fast that they gained sight of Robert and his foster-brother. The king asked his companion what help he could give him, and his foster-brother answered he was ready to do his best. So these two turned on the five men of John of Lorn, and killed them all. It is to be supposed they were better armed than the others were, as well as stronger and more desperate.

But by this time Bruce was very much fatigued; and yet they dared not sit down to take any rest, for whenever they stopped for an instant they heard the cry of the bloodhound behind them, and knew by that that their enemies were coming up fast after them.

At length they came to a wood through

which ran a small river. Then Bruce said to his foster-brother, "Let us wade down this stream for a great way, instead of going straight across, and so this unhappy hound will lose the scent; for if we were once clear of him, I should not be afraid of getting away from the pursuers."

Accordingly the king and his attendant walked a great way down the stream, taking care to keep their feet in the water, which could not retain any scent where they had stepped. Then they came ashore on the farther side from the enemy, and went deep into the wood before they stopped to rest themselves.

In the meanwhile the hound led John of Lorn straight to the place where the king went into the water, but there the dog began to be puzzled, not knowing where to go next; for you are well aware that the running water could not retain the scent

of a man's foot, like that which remains on turf. So John of Lorn seeing the dog was at fault, as it is called—that is, had lost the track of that which he pursued—gave up the chase, and returned to join with Aymer de Valence.

But King Robert's adventures were not yet ended. His foster-brother and he had rested themselves in the wood; but they had got no food, and were become extremely hungry. They walked on, however, in hopes of coming to some habitation. At length, in the midst of the forest, they met with three men who looked like thieves or ruffians. They were well armed, and one of them bore a sheep on his back, which it seemed as if they had just stolen.

They saluted the king civilly; and he, replying to their salutation, asked them where they were going. The men answered, they were seeking for Robert Bruce, for

that they intended to join with him. The king answered that, if they would go with him, he would conduct them where they would find the Scottish king. Then the man who had spoken changed countenance, and Bruce, who looked sharply at him, began to suspect that the ruffian guessed who he was, and that he and his companions had some design against his person, in order to gain the reward which had been offered for his life.

So he said to them, "My good friends, as we are not well acquainted with each other, you must go before us, and we will follow near to you."

"You have no occasion to suspect any harm from us," answered the man.

"Neither do I suspect any," said Bruce; "but this is the way in which I choose to travel."

The men did as he commanded, and thus

they travelled till they came together to a waste and ruinous cottage, where the men proposed to dress some part of the sheep which their companion was carrying. The king was glad to hear of food; but he insisted that there should be two fires kindled—one for himself and his foster-brother at one end of the house, the other at the other end for their three companions.

The men did as he desired. They broiled a quarter of mutton for themselves, and gave another to the king and his attendant. They were obliged to eat it without bread or salt; but as they were very hungry, they were glad to get food in any shape, and partook of it very heartily.

Then so heavy a drowsiness fell on King Robert that, for all the danger he was in, he could not resist an inclination to sleep. But first he desired his foster-brother to watch while he slept, for he had great suspicion of

their new acquaintances. His foster-brother promised to keep awake, and did his best to keep his word. But the king had not been long asleep ere his foster-brother fell into a deep slumber also, for he had undergone as much fatigue as the king.

When the three villains saw the king and his attendant asleep, they made signs to each other, and, rising up at once, drew their swords with the purpose to kill them both. But the king slept but lightly, and for as little noise as the traitors made in rising, he was awakened by it, and, starting up, drew his sword, and went to meet them. At the same moment he pushed his foster-brother with his foot, to awaken him, and he got on his feet ; but ere he got his eyes cleared to see what was about to happen, one of the ruffians that were advancing to slay the king killed him with a stroke of his sword.

The king was now alone, one man against

three, and in the greatest danger of his life; but his amazing strength and the good armour which he wore freed him once more from this great peril, and he killed the three men, one after another. He then left the cottage, very sorrowful for the death of his faithful foster-brother, and took his direction towards the place where he had appointed his men to assemble after their dispersion. It was now near night, and the place of meeting being a farmhouse, he went boldly into it, where he found the mistress, an old true-hearted Scotswoman, sitting alone. Upon seeing a stranger enter, she asked him who and what he was. The king answered that he was a traveller, who was journeying through the country.

"All travellers," answered the good woman, "are welcome here, for the sake of one."

"And who is that one," said the king,

"for whose sake you make all travellers welcome?"

"It is our rightful king, Robert the Bruce," answered the mistress, "who is the lawful lord of this country; and although he is now pursued and hunted after with hounds and horns, I hope to live to see him king over all Scotland."

"Since you love him so well, dame," said the king, "know that you see him before you. I am Robert the Bruce."

"You!" said the good woman, in great surprise. "And wherefore are you thus alone?—where are all your men?"

"I have none with me at this moment," answered Bruce, "and therefore I must travel alone."

"But that shall not be," said the brave old dame, "for I have two stout sons, gallant and trusty men, who shall be your servants for life and death."

So she brought her two sons, and though she well knew the dangers to which she exposed them, she made them swear fidelity to the king; and they afterwards became high officers in his service.

Now, the loyal old woman was getting everything ready for the king's supper, when suddenly there was a great trampling of horses heard round the house. They thought it must be some of the English, or John of Lorn's men, and the good wife called upon her sons to fight to the last for King Robert. But shortly after, they heard the voice of the Good Lord James of Douglas, and of Edward Bruce, the king's brother, who had come with a hundred and fifty horsemen to this farmhouse, according to the instructions that the king had left with them at parting.

Robert the Bruce was right joyful to meet his brother and his faithful friend Lord James; and had no sooner found himself

once more at the head of such a considerable body of followers, than, forgetting hunger and weariness, he began to inquire where the enemy who had pursued them so long had taken up their abode for the night; "for," said he, "as they must suppose us totally scattered and fled, it is likely that they will think themselves quite secure, and disperse themselves into distant quarters, and keep careless watch."

"That is very true," answered James of Douglas, "for I passed a village where there are two hundred of them quartered, who had placed no sentinels; and if you have a mind to make haste, we may surprise them this very night, and do them more mischief than they have been able to do us during all this day's chase."

Then there was nothing but mount and ride; and as the Scots came by surprise on the body of English whom Douglas had

mentioned, and rushed suddenly into the village where they were quartered, they easily dispersed and cut them to pieces—thus, as Douglas had said, doing their pursuers more injury than they themselves had received during the long and severe pursuit of the preceding day.

The consequence of these successes of King Robert was that soldiers came to join him on all sides, and that he obtained several victories over Sir Aymer de Valence, Lord Clifford, and other English commanders; until at length the English were afraid to venture into the open country as formerly, unless when they could assemble themselves in considerable bodies. They thought it safer to lie still in the towns and castles which they had garrisoned, and wait till the King of England should once more come to their assistance with a powerful army.

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.

KING EDWARD THE SECOND of England was not a wise and brave man like his father, but a foolish prince, who was influenced by unworthy favourites, and thought more of pleasure than of governing his kingdom. His father, Edward the First, would have entered Scotland at the head of a large army, before he had left Bruce time to conquer back so much of the country as he had done. But, very fortunately for the Scots, that wise and skilful though ambitious king died when he was on the point of marching into Scotland.

His son Edward had afterwards neglected the Scottish war, and thus lost the oppor-

tunity of defeating Bruce when his force was small. But now when Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor of Stirling, came to London, to tell the king that Stirling, the last Scottish town of importance which remained in possession of the English, was to be surrendered if it were not relieved by force of arms before midsummer, then all the English nobles called out it would be a sin and shame to permit the fair conquest which Edward the First had made to be forfeited to the Scots for want of fighting. It was, therefore, resolved that the king should go himself to Scotland, with as great forces as he could possibly muster.

King Edward the Second therefore assembled one of the greatest armies which a king of England ever commanded. There were troops brought from all his dominions. Many brave soldiers from the French

provinces which the King of England possessed in France—many Irish, many Welsh —and all the great English nobles and barons, with their followers, were assembled in one great army. The number was not less than one hundred thousand men.

King Robert the Bruce summoned all his nobles and barons to join him, when he heard of the great preparation which the King of England was making. They were not so numerous as the English by many thousand men. In fact, his whole army did not very much exceed thirty thousand, and they were much worse armed than the wealthy Englishmen; but then Robert, who was at their head, was one of the most expert generals of the time; and the officers he had under him were his brother Edward, his nephew Randolph, his faithful follower the Douglas, and other brave and experienced leaders, who com-

manded the same men that had been accustomed to fight and gain victories under every disadvantage of situation and numbers.

The king, on his part, studied how he might supply by address and stratagem what he wanted in numbers and strength. He knew the superiority of the English, both in their heavy-armed cavalry, which were much better mounted and armed than that of the Scots; and in their archers, who were better trained than any others in the world. Both these advantages he resolved to provide against.

With this purpose he led his army down into a plain near Stirling called the Park, near which, and beneath it, the English army must needs pass through a boggy country, broken with watercourses, while the Scots occupied hard dry ground.

He then caused all the ground upon the front of his line of battle, where cavalry

were likely to act, to be dug full of holes about as deep as a man's knee. These were filled with light brushwood, and the turf was laid on the top so that it appeared a plain field, while in reality it was all full of these pits as a honeycomb is of holes. He also, it is said, caused steel spikes called caltrops to be scattered up and down in the plain, where the English cavalry were most likely to advance, trusting in that manner to lame and destroy their horses.

When the Scottish army was drawn up the line stretched north and south. On the south it was terminated by the banks of the brook called Bannockburn, which are so rocky that no troops could attack them there. On the left the Scottish line extended near to the town of Stirling.

Bruce reviewed his troops very carefully; all the useless servants, drivers of carts, and such like, of whom there were very many, he

ordered to go behind a height, afterwards, in memory of the event, called the Gillies' Hill—that is, the servants' hill. He then spoke to the soldiers, and expressed his determination to gain the victory, or to lose his life on the field of battle. He desired that all those who did not propose to fight to the last should leave the field before the battle began, and that none should remain except those who were determined to take the issue of victory or death, as God should send it.

When the main body of his army was thus placed in order, the king posted Randolph, with a body of horse, near to the church of St. Ninian's, commanding him to use the utmost diligence to prevent any succours from being thrown into Stirling Castle. He then dispatched James of Douglas, and Sir Robert Keith, the Mareschal of the Scottish army, in order that they might survey, as nearly as

they could, the English force, which was now approaching from Falkirk.

They returned with information that the approach of that vast host was one of the most beautiful and terrible sights which could be seen—that the whole country seemed covered with men-at-arms on horse and foot; that the number of standards, banners, and pennons (all flags of different kinds) made so gallant a show that the bravest and most numerous host in Christendom might be alarmed to see King Edward moving against them.

It was upon the 23rd of June (1314) the King of Scotland heard the news that the English army were approaching Stirling. He drew out his army, therefore, in the order which he had before resolved on. After a short time Bruce, who was looking out anxiously for the enemy, saw a body of English cavalry trying to get into Stirling

from the eastward. This was the Lord Clifford, who, with a chosen body of eight hundred horse, had been detached to relieve the castle.

"See, Randolph," said the king to his nephew, "there is a rose fallen from your chaplet." By this he meant that Randolph had lost some honour by suffering the enemy to pass where he had been stationed to hinder them. Randolph made no reply, but rushed against Clifford with little more than half his number. The Scots were on foot. The English turned to charge them with their lances, and Randolph drew up his men in close order to receive the onset. He seemed to be in so much danger that Douglas asked leave of the king to go and assist him. The king refused him permission.

"Let Randolph," he said, "redeem his own fault; I cannot break the order of battle for his sake." Still the danger appeared

(1449)

The Battle of Bannockburn.

greater, and the English horse seemed entirely to encompass the small handful of Scottish infantry. "So please you," said Douglas to the king, "my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Randolph perish. I must go to his assistance." He rode off accordingly; but long before they had reached the place of combat they saw the English horses galloping off, many with empty saddles.

"Halt!" said Douglas to his men. "Randolph has gained the day. Since we were not soon enough to help him in the battle, do not let us lessen his glory by approaching the field." Now that was nobly done, especially as Douglas and Randolph were always contending which should rise highest in the good opinion of the king and the nation.

The van of the English army now came in sight, and a number of their bravest

knights drew near to see what the Scots were doing. They saw King Robert dressed in his armour, and distinguished by a gold crown which he wore over his helmet. He was not mounted on his great war-horse, because he did not expect to fight that evening. But he rode on a little pony up and down the ranks of his army, putting his men in order, and carried in his hand a sort of battle-axe made of steel. When the king saw the English horsemen draw near, he advanced a little before his own men, that he might look at them more nearly.

There was a knight among the English called Sir Henry de Bohun, who thought this would be a good opportunity to gain great fame to himself, and put an end to the war, by killing King Robert. The king being poorly mounted and having no lance, Bohun galloped on him suddenly and furiously, thinking, with his long spear and his

tall, powerful horse, easily to bear him down to the ground.

King Robert saw him, and permitted him to come very near, then suddenly turned his pony a little to one side, so that Sir Henry missed him with the lance point, and was in the act of being carried past him by the career of his horse. But as he passed, King Robert rose up in his stirrups, and struck Sir Henry on the head with his battle-axe so terrible a blow that it broke to pieces his iron helmet as if it had been a nutshell, and hurled him from his saddle. He was dead before he reached the ground.

This gallant action was blamed by the Scottish leaders, who thought Bruce ought not to have exposed himself to so much danger when the safety of the whole army depended on him. The king only kept looking at his weapon, which was injured by the force of the blow, and said, "I have broken my good battle-axe."

The next morning (being the 24th June), at break of day, the battle began in terrible earnest. The English as they advanced saw the Scots getting into line. The Abbot of Inchaffray walked through their ranks barefooted, and exhorted them to fight for their freedom. They kneeled down as he passed, and prayed to Heaven for victory. King Edward, who saw this, called out, "They kneel down—they are asking forgiveness." "Yes," said a celebrated English baron called Ingelram de Umphraville; "but they ask it from God, not from us. These men will conquer, or die upon the field."

The English king ordered his men to begin the battle. The archers then bent their bows, and began to shoot so closely together that the arrows fell like flakes of snow on a Christmas Day. They killed many of the Scots, and might, as at Falkirk and other places, have decided the victory;

but Bruce, as I told you before, was prepared for them.

He had in readiness a body of men-at-arms, well mounted, who rode at full gallop among the archers; and as they had no weapons save their bows and arrows, which they could not use when they were attacked hand to hand, they were cut down in great numbers by the Scottish horsemen, and thrown into total confusion.

The fine English cavalry then advanced to support their archers and to attack the Scottish line. But coming over the ground which was dug full of pits, the horses fell into these holes, and the riders lay tumbling about without any means of defence, and unable to rise from the weight of their armour. The Englishmen began to fall into general disorder, and the Scottish king, bringing up more of his forces, attacked and pressed them still more closely.

On a sudden, while the battle was obstinately maintained on both sides, an event happened which decided the victory. The servants and attendants on the Scottish camp had, as I told you, been sent behind the army to a place afterwards called the Gillies' Hill; but when they saw that their masters were likely to gain the day, they rushed from their place of concealment with such weapons as they could get, that they might have their share in the victory and in the spoil.

The English, seeing them come suddenly over the hill, mistook this disorderly rabble for a new army coming up to sustain the Scots, and, losing all heart, began to shift every man for himself. Edward himself left the field as hard as he could ride. A valiant knight, Sir Giles de Argentine, much renowned in the wars of Palestine, attended the king till he got him out of the press of the combat; but he would retreat no farther.

"It is not my custom," he said, "to fly." With that he took leave of the king, set spurs to his horse, and calling out his war-cry of "Argentine! Argentine!" he rushed into the thickest of the Scottish ranks, and was killed.

The young Earl of Gloucester was also slain, fighting valiantly. The Scots would have saved him, but as he had not put on his armorial bearings, they did not know him, and he was cut to pieces.

Edward first fled to Stirling Castle, and entreated admittance; but Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, reminded the fugitive sovereign that he was obliged to surrender the castle next day, so Edward was fain to fly through the Torwood, closely pursued by Douglas with a body of cavalry.

An odd circumstance happened during the chase, which showed how loosely some of the Scottish barons of that day held their

political opinions. As Douglas was riding furiously after Edward he met a Scottish knight, Sir Laurence Abernethy, with twenty horse. Sir Laurence had hitherto owned the English interest, and was bringing his band of followers to serve King Edward's army. But learning from Douglas that the English king was entirely defeated, he changed sides on the spot, and was easily prevailed upon to join Douglas in pursuing the unfortunate Edward with the very followers whom he had been leading to join his standard.

Douglas and Abernethy continued the chase, not giving King Edward time to alight from horseback even for an instant, and followed him as far as Dunbar, where the English had still a friend in the governor, Patrick, Earl of March. The earl received Edward in his forlorn condition, and furnished him with a fishing skiff, or small ship, in which he escaped to England, having

entirely lost his fine army and a great number of his bravest nobles.

The English never before or afterwards, whether in France or Scotland, lost so dreadful a battle as that of Bannockburn, nor did the Scots ever gain one of the same importance. Many of the best and bravest of the English nobility and gentry lay dead on the field; a great many more were made prisoners, and the whole of King Edward's immense army was dispersed or destroyed.

Thus did Robert Bruce arise from the condition of an exile, hunted with bloodhounds like a stag or beast of prey, to the rank of an independent sovereign, universally acknowledged to be one of the wisest and bravest kings who then lived.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBURN.

IN the year 1388 the Scottish nobles had determined upon an invasion of England on a large scale, and had assembled a great army for that purpose; but learning that the people of Northumberland were raising an army on the eastern frontier, they resolved to limit their incursion to that which might be achieved by the Earl of Douglas with a chosen band of four or five thousand men.

With this force he penetrated into the mountainous frontier of England, where an assault was least expected, and issuing forth near Newcastle, fell upon the flat and rich country around, slaying, plundering, burning, and loading his army with spoil.

Percy, Earl of Northumberland, an English noble of great power, with whom the Douglas had frequently had encounters, sent his two sons, Sir Henry and Sir Ralph Percy, to stop the progress of this invasion. Both were gallant knights; but the first, who from his impetuosity was called Hotspur, was one of the most distinguished warriors in England, as Douglas was in Scotland.

The brothers threw themselves hastily into Newcastle, to defend that important town; and as Douglas, in an insulting manner, drew up his followers before the walls, they came out to skirmish with the Scots. Douglas and Henry Percy encountered personally, and it so chanced that Douglas in the struggle got possession of Hotspur's spear, to the end of which was attached a small ornament of silk, embroidered with pearls, on which was represented a lion, the cognizance, as it is called, of the Percies.

Douglas shook this trophy aloft, and declared that he would carry it into Scotland, and plant it on his castle of Dalkeith.

"That," said Percy, "shalt thou never do. I will regain my lance ere thou canst get back into Scotland."

"Then," said Douglas, "come to seek it, and thou shalt find it before my tent."

The Scottish army, having completed the purpose of their expedition, began their retreat up the vale of the little river Reed, which afforded a tolerable road running north-westward towards their own frontier. They encamped at Otterburn, about twenty miles from the Scottish border, on the 19th August 1388.

In the middle of the night the alarm arose in the Scottish camp that the English host were coming upon them, and the moonlight showed the approach of Sir Henry Percy, with a body of men superior in num-

ber to that of Douglas. He had already crossed the Reed water, and was advancing towards the left flank of the Scottish army.

Douglas, not choosing to receive the assault in that position, drew his men out of the camp, and, with a degree of military skill which scarce could have been expected when his forces were of such an undisciplined character, he altogether changed the position of the army, and presented his troops with their front to the advancing English.

Hotspur, in the meantime, marched his squadrons through the deserted camp, where there were none left but a few servants and stragglers of the army. The interruptions which the English troops met with threw them a little into disorder, when the moon arising showed them the Scottish army, which they had supposed to be retreating, drawn up in complete order and prepared to fight.

The battle commenced with the greatest fury; for Percy and Douglas were the two most distinguished soldiers of their time, and each army trusted in the courage and talents of their commanders, whose names were shouted on either side. The Scots, who were outnumbered, were at length about to give way, when Douglas, their leader, caused his banner to advance, attended by his best men. He himself, shouting his war-cry of "Douglas!" rushed forward, clearing his way with the blows of his battle-axe, and breaking into the very thickest of the enemy. He fell at length under three mortal wounds.

Had his death been observed by the enemy, the event would probably have decided the battle against the Scots; but the English only knew that some brave man-at-arms had fallen. Meantime the other Scottish nobles pressed forward, and found their general dying among several of his faithful esquires

and pages, who lay slain around. A stout priest called William of North Berwick, the chaplain of Douglas, was protecting the body of his wounded patron with a long lance.

"How fares it, cousin?" said Sinclair, the first Scottish knight who came up to the expiring leader.

"Indifferently," answered Douglas; "but blessed be God, my ancestors have died in fields of battle, not on down beds. I sink fast; but let them still cry my war-cry, and conceal my death from my followers. There was a tradition in our family that a dead Douglas should win a field, and I trust it will be this day accomplished."

The nobles did as he had enjoined: they concealed the earl's body, and again rushed on to the battle, shouting "Douglas!" Douglas!" louder than before. The English were weakened by the loss of the brave brothers Henry and Ralph Percy, both of

whom were made prisoners, fighting most gallantly, and almost no man of note amongst the English escaped death or captivity. Hence a Scottish poet has said of the name of Douglas,—

> "Hosts have been known at that dread sound to yield,
> And, Douglas dead, his name hath won the field."

Sir Henry Percy became the prisoner of Sir Hugh Montgomery, who obliged him for ransom to build a castle for him at Penoon in Ayrshire. The battle of Otterburn was disastrous to the leaders on both sides—Percy being made captive, and Douglas slain on the field.

(1449)

At the Battle of Otterburn.

THE GOOD KING JAMES.

THIS King James, the first monarch of the name, was also the first of his unfortunate family who showed a high degree of talent. Robert the Second and Robert the Third, his father and grandfather, were both rather amiable as individuals than respected for their endowments as monarchs. But James had received an excellent education, of which his talents had enabled him to make the best use. He was also prudent and just, consulted the interests of his people, and endeavoured, as far as he could, to repress those evils which had grown up through the partial government of Robert, Duke of Albany, the rule of the feeble and

slothful Duke Murdac, and the vicious and violent conduct of his sons.

The first vengeance of the laws fell upon Murdac, who, with his two sons, was tried and condemned at Stirling for abuse of the king's authority, committed while Murdac was regent. They were beheaded at the little eminence at Stirling, which is still shown on the Castle Hill. The regent, from that elevated spot, might have a distant view of the magnificent castle of Doune, which he had built for his residence; and the sons had ample reason to regret their contempt of their father's authority, and to judge the truth of his words when he said he would bring in one who would rule them all.

James afterwards turned his cares to the Highlands, which were in a state of terrible confusion. He marched into those disturbed districts with a strong army, and seized upon more than forty of the chiefs, by whom

these broils and quarrels were countenanced, put many of them to death, and obliged others to find security that they would be quiet in future. Alaster Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, after more than a year's captivity, and his mother having been retained in vain as a hostage for his fidelity, endeavoured to oppose the royal authority; but the measures taken against him by James reduced his power so much that he was at last obliged to submit to the king's mercy. For this purpose the humbled chief came to Edinburgh secretly, and suddenly appeared in the Cathedral Church, where the king was employed in his devotions upon Easter Day.

He appeared without bonnet, armour, or ornaments, with his legs and arms bare, and his body only covered with a plaid. In this condition he delivered himself up to the king's pleasure; and holding a naked sword in his

hand by the point, he offered the hilt to the king in token of unreserved submission.

James forgave him his repeated offences, at the intercession of the queen and nobles present, but he detained him a prisoner in the strong castle of Tantallon, in East Lothian. Yet, after this submission of their principal chief, the West Highlanders and people of the Isles again revolted, under the command of Donald Balloch, the kinsman of Alaster, who landed on the mainland with a considerable force, and defeated the Earls of Mar and Caithness with great slaughter; but when he heard that James was coming against him, Donald thought it best to retreat to Ireland. James put to death many of his followers. Donald himself was afterwards killed in Ireland, and his head sent to the king.

There is another story which will show the cruelty and ferocity of these Highland

robbers. Another Macdonald, head of a band in Ross-shire, had plundered a poor widow woman of two of her cows, and she, in her anger, exclaimed repeatedly that she would never wear shoes again till she had carried her complaint to the king for redress, should she travel to Edinburgh to seek him. "It is false," answered the barbarian; "I will have you shod myself before you reach the court." Accordingly, he caused a smith to nail shoes to the poor woman's naked feet, as if they had been those of a horse; after which he thrust her forth, wounded and bleeding, on the highway.

The widow, however, being a woman of high spirit, was determined to keep her word; and as soon as her wounds permitted her to travel, she did actually go on foot to Edinburgh, and, throwing herself before James, acquainted him with the cruelty which had been exercised on her, and in

evidence showed her feet, still seamed and scarred. James heard her with that mixture of pity, kindness, and uncontrollable indignation which marked his character, and, in great resentment, caused Macdonald and twelve of his principal followers to be seized, and to have their feet shod with iron shoes in the same manner as had been done to the widow. In this condition they were exhibited to the public for three days, and then executed.

Thus James the First restored a considerable degree of tranquillity to the country, which he found in such a distracted state. He made wise laws for regulating the commerce of the nation, both at home and with other states, and strict regulations for the administration of justice betwixt those who had complaints against one another.

But his greatest labour, and that which he found most difficult to accomplish, was to

diminish the power of the great nobles, who ruled like so many kings, each on his own territory and estate, and made war on the king, or upon one another, whenever it was their pleasure to do so. These disorders he endeavoured to check, and had several of these great persons brought to trial, and, upon their being found guilty, deprived them of their estates. The nobles complained that this was done out of spite against them, and that they were treated with hardship and injustice; and thus discontents were entertained against this good prince.

Another cause of offence was that, to maintain justice and support the authority of the throne, it was found necessary that some taxes for this purpose should be raised from his subjects; and the Scottish people being poor, and totally unaccustomed to pay any such contributions, they imputed this

odious measure to the king's avarice. And thus, though King James was so well-intentioned a king, and certainly the ablest who had reigned in Scotland since the days of Robert Bruce, yet both the high and the low murmured against him, which encouraged some wicked men amongst the nobility to conspire his death.

The chief person in the plot was one Sir Robert Graham, uncle to the Earl of Stratherne. He was bold and ambitious, and was highly offended with the king on account of an imprisonment which he had sustained by the royal command. He drew into the plot the Earl of Athole, an old man of little talent, by promising to make his son, Sir Robert Stewart, King of Scotland, in place of James. Others were engaged in the conspiracy from different motives.

To many of their attendants they pretended they only wished to carry away a

lady out of the court. To prepare his scheme, Graham retreated into the remote Highlands, and from thence sent a defiance, renouncing his allegiance to the king, and threatening to put his sovereign to death with his own hand. A price was set upon his head, payable to any one who should deliver him up to justice; but he lay concealed in the wild mountains to prosecute his revenge against James.

The Christmas preceding his murder was appointed by the king for holding a feast at Perth. On his way to that town he was met by a Highland woman calling herself a prophetess. She stood by the side of the ferry by which he was about to travel to the north, and cried with a loud voice, "My Lord the King, if you pass this water you will never return again alive." The king was struck with this for a moment, because he had read in a book that a king should

be slain that year in Scotland: for it often happens that when a remarkable deed is in agitation, rumours of it get abroad, and are repeated under pretence of prophecies, but which are, in truth, only conjectures of that which seems likely to happen.

There was a knight in the court, on whom the king had conferred the name of the King of Love, to whom the king said in jest, "There is a prophecy that a king shall be killed in Scotland this year; now, Sir Alexander, that must concern either you or me, since we two are the only kings in Scotland." Other circumstances occurred which might have prevented the good king's murder, but none of them were attended to. The king, while at Perth, took up his residence in an abbey of Black Friars, there being no castle or palace in the town convenient for his residence; and this made the execution of the conspiracy more easy, as

his guards and the officers of his household were quartered among the citizens.

The day had been spent by the king in sport and feasting, and by the conspirators in preparing for their enterprise. They had destroyed the locks of the doors of the apartment, so that the keys could not be turned; and they had taken away the bars with which the gates were secured, and had provided planks by way of bridges on which to cross the ditch which surrounded the monastery. At length, on the 20th February 1437, all was prepared for carrying their treasonable purpose into execution, and Graham came from his hiding-place in the neighbouring mountains, with a party of nigh three hundred men, and entered the gardens of the convent.

The king was in his night-gown and slippers. He had passed the evening gaily with the nobles and ladies of his court, in

reading romances, and in singing and music, or playing at chess. The Earl of Athole, and his son Sir Robert Stewart, who expected to succeed James on the throne, were among the last courtiers who retired. At this time James remained standing before the fire, and conversing gaily with the queen and her ladies before he went to rest. The Highland woman before mentioned again demanded permission to speak with the king, but was refused on account of the untimeliness of the hour. All now were ordered to withdraw.

At this moment there was a noise and clashing heard, as of men in armour, and the torches in the garden cast up great flashes of light against the windows. The king then recollected his deadly enemy, Sir Robert Graham, and guessed that he was coming to murder him. He called to the ladies who were left in the chamber to keep the door as well as they could, in order to give him time to escape.

He first tried to get out at the windows; but they were fast barred, and defied his strength. By help of the tongs, which were in the chimney, he raised, however, a plank of the flooring of the apartment, and let himself down into a narrow vault beneath, used as a common sewer. This vault had formerly had an opening into the court of the convent, by which he might have made his escape. But all things turned against the unfortunate James; for only three days before he had caused the opening to be built up, because when he played at ball in the courtyard the ball used to roll into the vault through that hole.

While the king was in this place of concealment the conspirators were seeking him from chamber to chamber throughout the convent, and at length came to the room where the ladies were. The queen and her women endeavoured, as well as they might, to keep the door shut, and one of them,

Catherine Douglas, boldly thrust her own arm across the door, instead of the bar, which had been taken away, as I told you. But the brave lady's arm was soon broken, and the traitors rushed into the room with swords and daggers drawn, hurting and throwing down such of the women as opposed them. The poor queen stood half undressed, shrieking aloud ; and one of the brutal assassins attacked, wounded, and would have slain her, had it not been for a son of Sir Robert Graham, who said to him, "What would you do to the queen ? She is but a woman. Let us seek the king."

They accordingly commenced a minute search, but without any success ; so they left the apartment, and sought elsewhere about the monastery. In the meanwhile the king turned impatient, and desired the ladies to bring sheets and draw him up out of the inconvenient lurking-place. In the attempt

Elizabeth Douglas fell down beside the king, and at this unlucky moment the conspirators returned.

One of them now recollected that there was such a vault, and that they had not searched it. And when they tore up the plank and saw the king and the lady beneath in the vault, one of them called, with savage merriment, to his followers, "Sirs, I have found him for whom we have sought all night."

Then first one and then another of the villains, brethren of the name of Hall, descended into the vault, with daggers drawn, to dispatch the unfortunate king, who was standing there in his shirt, without weapons of any kind. But James, who was an active and strong man, threw them both down beneath his feet, and struggled to wrest the dagger from one or other of them, in which attempt his hands were severely cut and mangled. The murderers also were so

vigorously handled that the marks of the king's gripe were visible on their throats for weeks afterwards.

Then Sir Robert Graham himself sprung down on the king, who, finding no further defence possible, asked him for mercy, and for leisure to confess his sins to a priest. But Graham replied fiercely, "Thou never hadst mercy on those of thine own blood, nor on any one else, therefore thou shalt find no mercy here; and as for a confessor, thou shalt have none but this sword." So speaking, he thrust the sword through the king's body. And yet it is said that, when he saw his prince lying bleeding under his feet, he was desirous to have left the enterprise unfinished. But the other conspirators called on Graham to kill the king, otherwise he should himself die by their hands; upon which Graham, with the two men who had descended into the vault before him, fell on

The Murder of King James.

the unhappy prince with their daggers, and slew him by many stabs. There were sixteen wounds in his breast alone.

By this time, but too late, news of this outrage had reached the town, and the household servants of the king, with the people inhabiting the town of Perth, were hastening to the rescue, with torches and weapons. The traitors accordingly caught the alarm, and retreated into the Highlands, losing in their flight only one or two, taken or slain by the pursuers. When they spoke about their enterprise among themselves, they greatly regretted that they had not killed the queen along with her husband, fearing that she would be active and inexorable in her vengeance.

Indeed their apprehensions were justified by the event; for Queen Joanna made so strict search after the villainous assassins that in the course of a month most of them were thrown into prison, and being tried and con-

demned, they were put to death with new and hideous tortures.

Notwithstanding the greatness of their crime, it was barbarous cruelty to torture these wretched murderers, and the historian says justly that it was a cruel deed cruelly revenged. But the people were much incensed against them; for although they had murmured against King James while he lived, yet the dismal manner of his death, and the sense that his intentions towards his people were kind and just, caused him to be much regretted.

He had also many popular qualities. His face was handsome, and his person strong and active. His mind was well cultivated with ornamental and elegant accomplishments, as well as stored with useful information. He understood music and poetry, and wrote verses, both serious and comic. Two of his compositions are still preserved, and are read with interest and entertainment by

those who understand the ancient language in which they are written. One of these is called "The King's Quhair"—that is, the king's book. It is a love poem, composed when he was a prisoner in England, and addressed to the Princess Joan of Somerset, whom he afterwards married.

On the whole, James the First was much and deservedly lamented. The murderer Graham was so far from being remembered with honour, as he had expected, for the assassination which he had committed, that his memory was execrated in a popular rhyme, then generally current :—

"Robert Graham,
That slew our king,
God give him shame!"

THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN.

THE Scottish army had fixed their camp upon a hill called Flodden, which rises to close in, as it were, the extensive flat called Millfield Plain. This eminence slopes steeply towards the plain, and there is an extended piece of level ground on the top, where the Scots might have drawn up their army and awaited at great advantage the attack of the English.

The Earl of Surrey, the English leader, liked the idea of venturing an assault on that position so ill that he resolved to try whether he could not prevail on the king to abandon it. He sent a herald to invite James to come down from the height and

join battle in the open plain of Millfield below, reminded him of the readiness with which he had accepted his former challenge, and hinted that it was the opinion of the English chivalry assembled for battle that any delay of the encounter would sound to the king's dishonour.

We have seen that James was sufficiently rash and imprudent, but his impetuosity did not reach to the pitch Surrey perhaps expected. He refused to receive the messenger into his presence, and returned for answer to the message that it was not such as became an earl to send to a king.

Surrey, therefore, distressed for provisions, was obliged to resort to another mode of bringing the Scots to action. He moved northward, sweeping round the hill of Flodden, keeping out of the reach of the Scottish artillery, until, crossing the Till near Twisell Castle, he placed himself, with his

whole army, betwixt James and his own kingdom.

The king suffered him to make this flank movement without interruption, though it must have afforded repeated and advantageous opportunities for attack. But when he saw the English army interposed betwixt him and his dominions, he became alarmed lest he should be cut off from Scotland. In this apprehension he was confirmed by one Giles Musgrave, an Englishman, whose counsel he used upon the occasion, and who assured him that, if he did not descend and fight with the English army, the Earl of Surrey would enter Scotland and lay waste the whole country. Stimulated by this apprehension, the king resolved to give signal for the fatal battle.

With this view the Scots set fire to their huts and the other refuse and litter of their camp. The smoke spread along the side of

the hill, and under its cover the army of King James descended the eminence, which is much less steep on the northern than the southern side, while the English advanced to meet them, both concealed from each other by the clouds of smoke.

The Scots descended in four strong columns, all marching parallel to each other, having a reserve of the Lothian men commanded by Earl Bothwell. The English were also divided into four bodies, with a reserve of cavalry led by Dacre.

The battle commenced at the hour of four in the afternoon. The first which encountered was the left wing of the Scots, commanded by the Earl of Huntly and Lord Home, which overpowered and threw into disorder the right wing of the English, under Sir Edmund Howard. Sir Edmund was beaten down, his standard taken, and he himself in danger of instant death, when

he was relieved by Heron, who came up at the head of a band of determined outlaws like himself and extricated Howard.

It is objected to the Lord Home by many Scottish writers that he ought to have improved his advantage by hastening to the support of the next division of the Scottish army. It is even pretended that he replied to those who urged him to go to the assistance of the king, that "the man did well that day who stood and saved himself."

But this seems invented, partly to criminate Home, and partly to account for the loss of the battle in some other way than by the superiority of the English. In reality, the English cavalry, under Dacre, which acted as a reserve, appear to have kept the victors in check; while Thomas Howard, the lord high admiral, who commanded the second division of the English, bore down and routed the Scottish division commanded by

Crawford and Montrose, who were both slain. Thus matters went on the Scottish left.

Upon the extreme right of James's army a division of Highlanders, consisting of the clans of MacKenzie, MacLean, and others, commanded by the Earls of Lennox and Argyle, were so insufferably annoyed by the volleys of the English arrows that they broke their ranks and, in despite of the cries, entreaties, and signals of De la Motte, the French ambassador, who endeavoured to stop them, rushed tumultuously down hill, and being attacked at once in flank and rear by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Cheshire and Lancashire, were routed with great slaughter.

The only Scottish division which remains to be mentioned was commanded by James in person, and consisted of the choicest of his nobles and gentry, whose armour was so good that the arrows made but slight im-

pression upon them. They were all on foot—the king himself had parted with his horse. They engaged the Earl of Surrey, who opposed to them the division which he personally commanded.

The Scots attacked with the greatest fury, and for a time had the better. Surrey's squadrons were disordered, his standard in great danger, Bothwell and the Scottish reserve were advancing, and the English seemed in some risk of losing the battle. But Stanley, who had defeated the Highlanders, came up on one flank of the king's division; the admiral, who had conquered Crawford and Montrose, assailed them on the other.

The Scots showed the most undaunted courage. Uniting themselves with the reserve under Bothwell, they formed into a circle, with their spears extended on every side, and fought obstinately. Bows being now useless, the English advanced on all

sides with their bills, a huge weapon which made ghastly wounds. But they could not force the Scots either to break or retire, although the carnage among them was dreadful.

James himself died amid his warlike peers and loyal gentry. He was twice wounded with arrows, and at length dispatched with a bill. Night fell without the battle being absolutely decided, for the Scottish centre kept their ground, and Home and Dacre held each other at bay. But during the night the remainder of the Scottish army drew off in silent despair from the bloody field, on which they left their king and their choicest nobles and gentlemen.

This great and decisive victory was gained by the Earl of Surrey on September 9, 1513. The victors had about five thousand men slain, the Scots twice that number at least. But the loss lay not so much in the

number of the slain as in their rank and quality. The English lost very few men of distinction. The Scots left on the field the king, two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers. The number of gentlemen slain was beyond calculation; there is scarcely a family of name in Scottish history who did not lose a relative there.

The Scots were much disposed to dispute the fact that James the Fourth had fallen on Flodden field. Some said he had retired from the kingdom, and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others pretended that in the twilight, when the fight was nigh ended, four tall horsemen came into the field, having each a bunch of straw on the point of their spears, as a token for them to know each other by. They said these men mounted the king on a dun hackney, and that he was seen to cross the Tweed with them at nightfall.

Nobody pretended to say what they did with him, but it was believed he was murdered in Home Castle; and I recollect, about forty years since, that there was a report that, in cleaning the draw-well of that ruinous fortress, the workmen found a skeleton wrapt in a bull's hide, and having a belt of iron round the waist.

There was, however, no truth in this rumour. It was the absence of this belt of iron which the Scots founded upon to prove that the body of James could not have fallen into the hands of the English, since they either had not that token to show or did not produce it. They contended, therefore, that the body over which the enemy triumphed was not that of James himself, but of one of his attendants, several of whom, they said, were dressed in his armour.

But all these are idle fables, invented and believed because the vulgar love what is

mysterious, and the Scots readily gave credit to what tended to deprive their enemies of so signal a trophy of victory. The reports are contrary to common sense. Lord Home was the chamberlain of James the Fourth, and high in his confidence. He had nothing whatever to gain by the king's death, and therefore we must acquit him of a great crime, for which there could be no adequate motive. The consequences of James's death proved, in fact, to be the earl's ruin, as we shall see presently.

It seems true that the king usually wore the belt of iron in token of his repentance for his father's death and the share he had in it. But it is not unlikely that he would lay aside such a cumbrous article of penance in a day of battle; or the English, when they despoiled his person, may have thrown it aside as of no value. The body which the English affirm to have been that of James was

found on the field by Lord Dacre, and carried by him to Berwick and presented to Surrey. Both of these two lords knew James's person too well to be mistaken. The body was also acknowledged by his two favourite attendants, Sir William Scott and Sir John Forman, who wept at beholding it.

Such was the end of that king, once so proud and powerful. The fatal battle of Flodden, in which he was slain and his army destroyed, is justly considered as one of the most calamitous events in Scottish history.

THE END.

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